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## **POL 492/2392: URBAN REVOLUTION: CONTEMPORARY CONSTELLATIONS OF SPATIAL POLITICS**

Tuesday 2:00-4:00pm UC 65

### **Course Description and Objectives**

French sociologist Henri Lefebvre published *Urban Revolution* in 1970 as a commentary on practices of political resistance and as a critique of modern urbanism. “Urban Revolution” refers not only to the various uprisings of 1968, but to the rapid growth and transformations of cities around the world, resulting in emerging forms of economic production and modes of life. “The urban,” according to Henri Lefebvre, has supplanted “the industrial” as the force of historical change and engine of capitalism. Today we reexamine these central propositions. Recent events, from the Arab Spring and Occupy Wall Street to anti-austerity protests in Athens and anti-World Cup demonstrations across Brazilian cities, suggest that urban space is coming to matter for radical politics in crucial ways. At the same time, rapid population growth, widespread gentrification, the financialization of everyday life, the militarization of infrastructure and the competition of “Global Cities” pose new challenges to communal living and to planning and policy-making. Everyday organizing for housing, access to food and water, transportation, environmental safety as well as cultural and social services also add to the complex fabric of urban struggles.

This seminar follows in the footsteps of Lefebvre’s analysis and argues that it is only by examining processes that shape the urban and its inhabitants that we can begin to understand the conditions of the contemporary world and therein the potential for social justice. Working with concepts from urban studies, geography and political theory, it asks two main questions: What are the contemporary constellations of urban society? And, what are the conditions of possibility for resistance in and against the violence and exploitation cemented in urban spaces? These questions are posed in a variety of contexts, both in the global North and the global South. The theoretical and empirical engagements of the course are thus carried out with the aim of being able to understand the 21<sup>st</sup> century city as an emerging political form and to address the urgent crises that mark its present moment.

### **Requirements**

#### *Participation*

It is assumed that students will attend every session—and arrive on time—unless a serious illness or emergency arises. Our classroom will be a safe academic environment where ideas are devised, debated, and deconstructed. I encourage you to participate even if you think that your views may be unpopular with other students. A university is an important place to debate difficult issues—and in doing so, to challenge others, to appreciate unfamiliar viewpoints, and to reflect upon and deepen one’s own convictions. All students are encouraged to think out loud and to exchange ideas openly.

As a seminar, this course will be directed by and for students. It is essential that you take your role as active participant seriously. The success of the seminar is dependent on the group's ability to work together and, through intelligent discussion, develop an understanding of the material that you would not have thought of on your own. A seminar is an ongoing and open conversation that unfolds through our collective engagements throughout the semester. The participants therefore carry the burden of responsibility for the quality of the discussion. Good discussions tend to occur when participants study texts closely in advance, listen actively, share their ideas and questions freely, and respond respectfully and generously to their peers.

### *Reading and Critical Responses*

The readings are the foundation of the course. “Required readings” are exactly that. Students should read all the required materials before class and be prepared—with notes—to discuss the major issues raised in the material. “Additional readings” are recommended texts that advance the week’s themes and can be used by students wanting to delve more deeply into a topic. Students are expected to read closely and with a critical eye. Students are also encouraged to suggest additional readings and to circulate to the class relevant texts (news articles, multimedia clips, personal essays, relevant events and conferences, journals, calls for papers etc.) that they discover throughout the quarter.

In addition to the weekly readings, you must submit a total of 3 critical reading responses. These must be more than descriptions or summaries and must interpret and analyze one or more of the main ideas, concepts or arguments presented in the reading. Students should use these papers both in order to reflect closely on a text or series of texts and to experiment with their own ideas. Papers must be turned in on the day the readings will be discussed. Students may choose which weeks to turn in a response, although the first response must be turned in by October 21<sup>st</sup> and students may not turn in a response on the day they are facilitating discussion.

### *Seminar Facilitation*

Each student will be expected to lead the seminar discussion on a set of readings at some point during the semester. Seminar facilitation will be done individually or in small groups of 2-3. A schedule of will be established the first day of the course. Those facilitating discussion on a given day should prepare a *concise* presentation (approximately 20 minutes) as well as questions or activities to stimulate discussion and inspire the exchange of ideas. Your introductory presentation should *not merely summarize the readings*, but might include some or all of the following:

- An introduction to the topic or reading. Who wrote the piece? When? With what purpose in mind? Why is the text relevant to the class?
- An analysis of how various readings for the week are connected to one another. If there are multiple assigned readings, think about how they are similar and on what points they diverge. How might each extend/challenge each other? What would the authors have to say to one another in a conversation?

- A critical account of each reading. This is not just a matter of telling the group "how you feel" about the text, but should argue something based on evidence. Was the text convincing? Why or why not? What assumptions underlie each analysis? Are these assumptions tenable? What is made visible (or invisible) through this interpretation? Does the author enable us to think in new and useful ways about the contested nature of urbanization? How might this text be situated within the larger framework of the class and the main debates over Urban Revolutions? Try to be specific (textual passages are always helpful) and provocative (raise points that you think might be of interest to others in the class as well) in your analysis.

### *Final Paper*

All students are expected to write a final research paper of approximately 15-20 pages in length. Papers should make use of the materials that we have covered in class and should consider the utility of some of the approaches, vocabulary and concepts for interpreting and understanding contemporary urban phenomenon. That being said, students (especially graduate students) are encouraged to use the readings and issues raised by the class to explore their own research agendas. Full details of the assignment will be given in class. A preliminary research prospectus will be due in class on October 28<sup>th</sup> while final papers will be due in class on December 2<sup>nd</sup>.

### **Evaluation**

The grade for the class will be determined as follows:

Participation	20%
Reading Responses	20%
Seminar Facilitation	20%
Research Paper	40%

### **Academic Policy:**

#### *Academic Integrity*

Plagiarism is a serious academic offence and will be dealt with accordingly. For further clarification and information, please see the University of Toronto's policy on Academic Integrity at <http://www.utoronto.ca/academicintegrity/resourcesforstudents.html>.

Students are strongly advised to keep draft work and hard copies of their assignments until the marked assignments have been returned.

#### *Deadlines*

All deadlines are firm. Students will not be given an opportunity to reschedule their seminar facilitation if they are absent or unprepared on the scheduled date. Late submissions of response papers will not be accepted. Final papers will be penalized 5% for each 24 hours after the deadline. If you have extenuating circumstances that are affecting your ability to meet deadlines, please speak with me in office hours as soon as you can.

## **Other Resources**

### *Accessibility*

The University of Toronto is committed to accessibility. If you require accommodations or have any accessibility concerns, visit <http://studentlife.utoronto.ca/accessibility> as soon as possible.

### *Writing*

The University of Toronto offers many helpful resources and tools to aid students in academic writing. I strongly suggest that you familiarize yourself with the workshops, tutoring services and advice guides provided at <http://www.writing.utoronto.ca>.

## **Readings**

There are two required books for the class available at the U of T bookstore, Henri Lefebvre's *The Urban Revolution* and Andy Merrifield's *The New Urban Question*. All other required readings will be available through Blackboard or the U of T libraries.

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## **PART I: Theorizing Contentious Politics in the City**

### September 9: Introductions

#### September 16: The Urban Revolution

##### *Required Reading*

Henri Lefebvre (2003) *The Urban Revolution*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, chapters 1-2, 7-9.

Henri Lefebvre (1976) "Reflections on the Politics of Space," *Antipode*, 8(2), 30-37.

##### *Recommended Reading*

Henri Lefebvre (2002) "The Right to the City," in *Blackwell City Reader*, edited by Sophie Watson and Gary Bridge, 367-74.

Henri Lefebvre (2003) *The Urban Revolution*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, chapter 3-6 and foreword by Neil Smith.

Andy Merrifield (2002) "Henri Lefebvre: Urban Revolution," in *Metromarxism*, New York: Routledge, 71-92.

Edward J. Soja "Part I: Remapping the Geohistory of City Space" in *Postmetropolis*, Malden: Wiley Blackwell, 1-144.

### September 23: Critical Responses

##### *Required Reading*

Manuel Castells (1983) *The City and the Grassroots*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 301-331.

David Harvey (2002) "The Urban Process under Capitalism: a Framework for Analysis," in *Blackwell City Reader*, edited by Sophie Watson and Gary Bridge, 116-124.

David Harvey (2008) "The Right to the City," *New Left Review* 53, 23-40.

*Additional Reading*

- Manuel Castells (1977) "From Urban Society to Urban Revolution," in *The Urban Question* Cambridge: MIT Press, 86-95.
- David Harvey (2009) *Social Justice and the City*, (Revised Edition) Athens: University of Georgia Press.
- Eugene McCann and Kevin Ward (eds.) (2006) "Debates and Developments" special section of the *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* on the legacy of *The City and the Grassroots* 30(1)
- Edward E. Soja (1980) "The socio-spatial dialectic," *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, 70(2), 207-225.

September 30: Alternative Perspectives

*Required Reading*

- Susan S. Fainstein (2011) *The Just City*, Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 57-86.
- Margit Mayer (2009) "The 'Right to the City' in the context of shifting mottos of urban social movements," *City* 13(2): 362-374.
- Walter Nicholls (2008) "The urban question revisited: the importance of cities for social movements," *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, 32(4), 841-859.
- Mark Purcell (2003) "Citizenship and the Right to the Global City: Reimagining the Capitalist World Order," *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 27(3), 564-590
- Tovi Fenster (2005) "The Right to the Gendered City: Different Formations of Belonging in Everyday Life," *Journal of Gender Studies*, 14(3): 217-231.

*Additional Reading*

- Yousuf Al-Bulushi, (2012) "Learning from urban revolt: From Watts to the banlieues," *City* 16.1, 34-56.
- Neil Brenner, Peter Marcuse, and Margit Mayer (eds.) (2009) "Cities for people, not for Profit," Special Issue of *City* 13(2).
- Rosalyn Deutsche (1991) "Boys town," *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*, 9(1), 5-30.
- Daniel Dorling (2011) *Injustice: Why Inequality Persists*. Bristol, UK: Policy Press.
- Susan Fainstein and C. Hirst (1995) "Urban social movements," in *Theories of urban politics* edited by D. Judge, G. Stoker and H. Wolman. Thousand Oaks, Sage. 181-204.
- Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri (2009) "Metropolis," in *Commonwealth*, Cambridge: Belknap Press, 249-261.
- Clarissa Rile Hayward and Todd Swanstrom (eds.) (2011) *Justice and the American Metropolis*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Jane Jacobs (1961) *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*, New York: Random House.
- Stefan Kipfer (2007) "Fanon and space: colonization, urbanization, and liberation from the colonial to the global city," *Environment and Planning D*, 25(4), 701-726.
- Helga Leitner et al. (2008) "The spatialities of contentious politics," *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, 33(2), 157-172.
- Andy Merrifield (2011) *Magical Marxism: Subversive Politics and the Imagination*, London: Pluto Press.
- Don Mitchell (2003) *The Right to the City*. New York: Guilford.

- Chris Pickvance (2003) "From urban social movements to urban movements: a review and introduction to a symposium on urban movements," *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 27(1), 102–109.
- Lilia Rodriguez (1994) "Barrio Women Between the Urban and the Feminist Movement," *Latin American Perspectives*, 21(3), 32-48.
- Edward W. Soja (2010) *Seeking Spatial Justice*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Neil Smith (1996) *The New Urban Frontier: Gentrification and the Revanchist City*, New York: Routledge.
- Gerda Wekerle (2000) Women's rights to the city: gendered spaces of a pluralistic citizenship. In E.Isin (ed.), *Democracy, citizenship and the global city*, New York: Routledge

### October 7: Contesting Urban Neoliberalism

#### *Required Reading*

- Andy Merrifield (2014) *The New Urban Question*. London: Pluto Press.
- Erik Swyngedouw (forthcoming) "Insurgent urbanity and the political city" In *Ethics of the Urban: The City and the Spaces of the Political*, edited by Mostafavi Moshsen, Zurich: Lars Müller Publishers.
- Jamie Peck (2005) "Struggling with the creative class." *International journal of urban and regional research* 29(4), 740-770.

#### *Additional Reading*

- BAVO (ed.) (2007) *Urban Politics Now: Re-imagining democracy in the neoliberal city*, Rotterdam: Nai Publishers.
- Neil Brenner and Nik Theodore (2002) "Cities and the geographies of 'actually existing neoliberalism'" *Antipode* 34(3), 349-379.
- Manuel Castells (2012) *Networks of Outrage and Hope: Social Movements in the Internet Age*, Bristol: Polity.
- Paula Chakravartty and Denise Ferreira da Silva (eds.) (2012) "Race, Empire, and the Crisis of the Subprime," Special Issue of *American Quarterly*, 64(3).
- Richard Florida (2004) *Cities and the Creative Class*, New York: Routledge.
- Edward Glaeser (2011) *Triumph of the City: How Our Greatest Invention Makes Us Richer, Greener, Smarter, Healthier and Happier*, New York: Penguin.
- David Harvey (2011) *The Enigma of Capital and The Crises of Capitalism*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- David Harvey (2005) *A Brief History of Neoliberalism*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- David Harvey (1989) "From managerialism to entrepreneurialism: the transformation in urban governance in late capitalism," *Geografiska Annaler. Series B. Human Geography*, 3-17.
- Helga Leitner, Jamie Peck and Eric Sheppard (eds.) (2007) "Squaring up to Neoliberalism" in *Contesting Neoliberalism: Urban Frontiers*, New York: Guilford, 311-327.
- Leo Panitch, Greg Albo, and Vivek Chibber (eds.) (2010) *The Crisis This Time*, London: Merlin Press.
- Neil Smith (2002) "New Globalism, New Urbanism: Gentrification as Global Urban Strategy," *Antipode* 34, 427-450.

## **PART II: Comparative Perspectives**

### October 14: Natural Resource Wars in El Alto/La Paz

#### *Required Reading*

Benjamin Dangl (2007) "Revolution in Reverse" in *Resource Wars and Social Movements in Bolivia*, Oakland: AK Press, 13-34.

Susan Spronk and Jeffrey Webber (2007) "Struggles against Accumulation by Dispossession in Bolivia The Political Economy of Natural Resource Contention," *Latin American Perspectives*, 34(2), 31-47.

Sian Lazar (2006) "El alto, ciudad rebelde: Organisational bases for revolt," *Bulletin of Latin American Research*, 25(2), 183-199.

Thomas Perreault (2006) "From the Guerra Del Agua to the Guerra Del Gas: resource governance, neoliberalism and popular protest in Bolivia," *Antipode*, 38(1), 150-172.

Video: *Leasing the Rain*, <https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL9FA821381FAADB58>

### October 21: Global City Construction in Dubai

#### *Required Reading*

Mike Davis (2007) "Sand, Fear, and Money in Dubai" in *Evil Paradises* edited by Mike Davis and Daniel Bertrand Monk, New York: The New Press, 48-68.

Ahmed Kanna (2010) "Flexible Citizenship in Dubai: Neoliberal Subjectivity in the Emerging 'City-Corporation,'" *Cultural Anthropology*, 25(1), 100-129.

Neha Vora (2011) "From golden frontier to global city: Shifting forms of belonging, "freedom," and governance among Indian businessmen in Dubai." *American Anthropologist*, 113(2), 306-318.

Michelle Buckley (2012) "From Kerala to Dubai and back again: construction migrants and the global economic crisis," *Geoforum*, 43(2), 250-259.

Video: Working Lives- Dubai, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HRnTl-vz1A8>

### October 28: Suburban Uprisings in Paris

#### *Required Reading*

Étienne Balibar (2007) "Uprisings in the Banlieues," *Constellations*, 14(1), 47-71.

Mustafa Dikeç (2007) "Revolting geographies: Urban Unrest in France," *Geography Compass*, 1(5), 1190-1206.

Loic Wacquant (2007) "French Working-Class Banlieues and Black American Ghetto: From Conflation to Comparison," *Qui Parle* 6(2)

Social Science Research Council (2006) "Riots in France," <http://riotsfrance.ssrc.org/> (read any three entries)

Video: *Paris Burning*, [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=X9r\\_NQiZEH4](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=X9r_NQiZEH4)

### November 4: Shackdwellers Movement in Durban

#### *Required Reading*

Nigel Gibson (2007) "Zabalaza, Unfinished Struggles against Apartheid: The Shackdwellers' Movement in Durban," *Socialism and Democracy*, 21(3), 60-96.

Richard Pithouse (2007) "Coffin for the Councillor," <http://abahlali.org/node/864>.

Raj Patel (2009) "Cities without Citizens," in *Contesting Development: Critical Struggles for Social Change*, New York: Routledge, 33-49.

Mike Davis (2004) "Planet of Slums," *New Left Review* 26.

Abahlali baseMjondolo (2013) <http://abahlali.org/> (familiarize yourself with the movement).  
Video: *A Place in the City*, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-NG2v9On4h4>

November 11: Occupy Everywhere?

Margaret Kohn (2013) "Privatization and Protest: Occupy Wall Street, Occupy Toronto, and the Occupation of Public Space in a Democracy," *Perspectives on Politics*, 11(01), 99-110.

Jeffrey Juris (2012) "Reflections on #Occupy Everywhere: Social media, public space, and emerging logics of aggregation," *American Ethnologist*, 39: 259–279.

Peter Marcuse (2013) Critical Planning and other Thoughts,  
<http://pmarcuse.wordpress.com/> (read blogs #1-5 on Occupy Wall Street)

Saskia Sassen (2011) "The Global Street Comes to Wall Street," SSRC Possible Futures,  
<http://www.possible-futures.org/2011/11/22/the-global-street-comes-to-wall-street/>

Video: *Occupy Oakland Prepares for General Strike*  
[http://www.democracynow.org/2011/11/2/occupy\\_oakland\\_prepares\\_for\\_general\\_strike](http://www.democracynow.org/2011/11/2/occupy_oakland_prepares_for_general_strike)

November 18: FALL BREAK: NO CLASS

**PART III: Sharing of Research**

November 25

Presentations of Research

December 2

Presentations of Research

*FINAL PAPERS DUE IN CLASS DECEMBER 2*